

THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A TECHNOLOGICAL ACCIDENT: CHEAP

NATURES, CLIMATE CRISIS & TECHNOLOGICAL IMPASSE

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What if Virilio's compelling rendering of integral accidents – as "chain reactions" of "incidents and disasters" – is turned inside out, into the heart of capitalism's much-vaunted capacity for so-called innovation? Integral accidents issue from capitalism's specific integration of power, profit and life. This cannot be reduced to the narrowly economic; modern technologies are so destructive because they incorporate capitalism's political constitution of the conditions of profibility: hence the centrality of imperialism and states in capitalist envi-ronment-making. Unless we accept the fetish of technology as a metaphysic of historical change, we must look at the specifcc relations that dominate the life of a civilization and its punishment/reward nexus for technological change. From this perspective, we may grasp capitalism's ongoing technological stagnation in the climate crisis. Technological stagnation refers not to some abstract benchmark of Progress, but to the specificity of capitalism's technological regime: the imperative to realize rising relative surplus value (labor productivity), necessary to counteract its tendency towards economic stagnation …

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